

SKILLSOURCE REGIONAL WORKFORCE BOARD

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, September 29, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://skillsource.zoom.us/j/88224493428?>

(ID: 88224493428, passcode: 527316)

Join by phone

+1 253-205-0468 (passcode: 527316)

1. Call to Order – Tad Hildebrand, Chair
2. Director's Report – Susan Adams INFO
3. Consent Agenda ACTION
The consent agenda enables the Board to approve items listed below together without discussion or individual motions. All items have been discussed and recommended for approval by their respective sub-committees. If any Board member believes an item does not belong on the consent agenda, they may at any time request the item be removed and considered for an individual discussion and vote, at the discretion of the Chair.
 - a. Board Meeting Minutes: June 23, 2026
 - b. One Stop Certification Approval (Okanogan, Grant/Adams, Chelan/Douglas)
 - c. Policy Update: Complaint Procedure & EcSA Incentives

New Business

4. Performance Target Negotiation INFO
5. AI Policy Review INFO
6. Strategic Plan Update from Committee INFO & DISCUSSION
7. November Meetings:
 - Committees: Okanogan 11/16, Moses Lake 11/17, Wenatchee 11/18 (12pm)
 - Board Mtg: Tues 12/1 (4pm) – Calendar invites to follow shortly

Enclosures

- PY26-27 Meeting Schedule
- Board Roster
- Financial Statements Year End
- Combined Success Stories
- Sub-Area Committee Reports

Mission Statement

SkillSource builds workforce skills with business and one-stop partners to increase economic prosperity throughout North Central Washington and the Columbia Basin.

1. Current Significant Issues

a) Washington State Budget Outlook

Washington faces a difficult 2027–29 budget cycle. State funding for Economic Security for All (EcSA) and Community Reinvestment is especially important to SkillSource as federal formula funds make up a smaller share of our revenue. We will monitor the Governor's proposal and advocate for investments that preserve training and supportive services across our five-county region.

b) Federal Funding and WIOA Reauthorization

The House Appropriations Committee's FY 2027 proposal would sharply reduce WIOA Title I funding and eliminate the Youth program. It has not been enacted. Congress is also considering WIOA reauthorization, including changes to training investments and local board accountability. I will be attending the National Association of Workforce Boards' advocacy summit in Washington, D.C., during the last week of September to discuss the value of locally directed workforce services with congressional offices and will report back to the board.

c) Open Letter to Governor Ferguson: WIOA Funds and EcSA

On September 16, the Washington Workforce Association, on behalf of all 12 local workforce boards, urged Governor Ferguson to release \$5.5 million in unused PY26 WIOA Governor's Set-Aside funds now through local boards. The letter also asks him to protect Economic Security for All (EcSA) from further cuts and increase state investment in the program. With new work requirements expected to increase demand for qualifying employment and training services, local boards are ready to use the funds to expand capacity. As WWA Board Chair, I joined my colleagues in signing the letter.

d) H.R. 1 Impacts

Changes to SNAP and Medicaid work requirements may increase the number of people seeking help to find employment or training and document their participation. Transportation, limited local opportunities, and the complexity of meeting ongoing requirements present particular challenges in rural communities. SkillSource is working with partners to understand the likely demand and coordinate referrals. The one-page side-by-side provided and reviewed at committee is enclosed.

e) New Apprenticeship Pathway Guidance

The U.S. Department of Labor has issued new guidance on effective pre-apprenticeship programs and how they can be supported through WIOA. Separate guidance explains how eligible apprenticeship classroom instruction may qualify for Workforce Pell. We will continue to review what these developments mean for our training policies and partnerships with employers and colleges, particularly opportunities to move participants into apprenticeships. I am participating on a state level apprenticeship study/academy called "Engines of Opportunity" with a specific goal to increase the utilization of WIOA Title IB funds for registered apprenticeship. SkillSource staff will provide insight and share their knowledge and experience in this 2 year project.

f) Forum of County Commissioners & Re-appointments:

I met with county commissioners in July to approve 2026-27 budgets. I will be meeting with them in December to extend board terms expiring December 2026, and approve the One Stop Operator, currently under competitive procurement.

2. Compliance Update

a) Auditors & State Monitoring

Cordell, Neher & Co. PLLC is performing the annual audit this month. Results will be presented at the December board meeting. State Monitors from Employment Security Department will be on site the last week of October to review programmatic and fiscal operations & compliance for program year 25-26.

3. Regional Workforce Plan: Two-Year Update

We've begun the required two-year update of our 2024–2028 Regional Workforce Plan. At the September sub-area committee, members discussed what has changed since the plan was adopted and which workforce needs deserve greater attention. Their input highlighted pressures on agriculture and other established industries, growth in data centers and clean energy, shortages in healthcare and the trades, increasing use of AI, and persistent barriers such as transportation, housing, and childcare.

Staff have compiled the committee feedback to guide a review of the plan's regional analysis, sector strategies, career pathways, support services, and performance priorities. The full board will discuss the emerging themes at the September 29th meeting, and written public comment will provide another opportunity for input. Staff will use that feedback to prepare proposed revisions for submission to the State Workforce Board by March 1, 2027.

4. Organizational Performance

A full area-wide performance report presentation will be postponed until the next board meeting as accurate year end data is not available due to the delay of the new statewide MIS system – WAWorks. We are also working on a 2054-26 Impact Report and may be ready to preview at the board meeting as well.

5. Local, State, National Engagement

I don't typically list out engagement activities or meetings, but this is a sample of connections made recently that are creating opportunities and strengthening partnerships. Leadership staff and subject matter experts regularly join me in these meetings/presentations.

- Presentations:

- WA State Dept of Commerce & Governor's Office of Equity: [Impacts of Community Reinvestment](#)
- WA Training & Education Coordinating Board: **Employer & Industry Engagement through work-based training**
- WA State Rehabilitation Council: *Youth Career Development Pathways through Braided Funding*
- National Youth Employment Council: **Youth Career Development Pathways through Braided Funding**
- Regional Innovation Roundtable: Deconstruction & Building Material Reuse: **Workforce Dev. Opportunities**

- Requested Meetings to Explore Partner Opportunities:

- WA Hospitality Association: Sonja Halverson & Tiffany Gering
- Microsoft: Greg Bianchi
- Engines of Opportunities: Apprenticeship Study – WA State

- Partner & Community

- Commissioner Nick Timm: Okanogan Outlook & Orientation
- Commissioner Kevin Burgess: Grant County Jail RESET Expansion
- WEDA: WA Economic Development Conference: Kennewick
- AI Summit: NCW Tech Alliance
- Our Valley Our Future: Educated & Inspired Working Group
- Wenatchee Valley Chamber: Business Development Roundtable
- Microsoft Celebration: Malaga Fire Station & Data Center



Community & Business Engagement Report

| July 2026 – September 2026 | Susan Adams & Mayra Garcia

SkillSource Brings Workforce Insights to AI Expo:

Associate Director for Systems and Operations Aaron Parrott represented SkillSource on a regional panel — *"Leading Through Tech Transformation"* — alongside leaders from Confluence Health, Chelan PUD, the City of Moses Lake, and Quincy School District. The discussion centered on how North Central Washington organizations are integrating AI, managing change, and identifying opportunities for innovation in their work. [Read more](#)



Mentorship, Apprenticeship, and a Legacy of

Learning: After nearly 37 years, Kris Ringsrud retired from her role in Systems Administration at SkillSource — and the person stepping into her shoes is someone she helped shape. Noah Olsen came to SkillSource's Wenatchee center to earn his GED, then was selected for a Computer Tech 1 apprenticeship where Kris served as his mentor. Noah now holds her former staff role and will also take her seat on the Wenatchee School District Apprenticeship Committee — providing oversight for the very program that launched his career. [Read more aWAbout this inspirational story.](#)

Innovative Schools Summit: Wenatchee Learning Center and Youth Training staff Alex, Christian, and Mike attended the July Innovative Schools Summit in Las Vegas — a national gathering of K–12 education innovators focused on research-backed strategies for improving student outcomes and school culture.

The team returned with fresh ideas and renewed energy to apply to their work with young people in our region.



WorkSource Wenatchee Valley Moves in With

SkillSource: SkillSource and the Employment Security Department's WorkSource Wenatchee Valley are now co-located, giving customers streamlined access to both agencies' job seeker and employer services under one roof. [Read more](#)

Notable Events:

- The Harvest Hustle (Hiring Event) @ Wenatchee Valley College on Oct 16
- WorkSource Central Basin Hiring Event on October 2.
- Poverty Simulation on Thursday, Sept 17 was held at Stampede Pavilion in Omak to provide Okanogan partners an opportunity to collaborate, empathize, and understand.

Connecting:

The partnership with the Othello Chamber of Commerce continues to strengthen. In July and August, the Small Business Development Center and the Washington State Department of Revenue hosted workshops at the Business is Brewing event. The workshops focused on state taxes and credits, as well as starting, scaling and strengthening a business. The next workshop is scheduled for September 23, when the Spokane Independent Metro Business Alliance (SIMBA) will present an overview of its services, including LLC formation, bookkeeping basics, expense tracking, and website and social media maintenance.

Through our partnership with the Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce Chamber hosts monthly networking events for Hispanic-owned businesses in Chelan and Douglas counties, with attendance ranging from 20 to 70 participants. In addition, they offer four workshops each year through Empresarios en Accion, with a typical attendance of 10 to 15 participants per session. The next workshop is scheduled for September 30, when the Small Business Development Center will present on creating a business plan.



Employee Training Grants

It's only the first quarter of the fiscal year, and our team is already seeing last year's efforts pay off in business engagement. We're working with the following businesses to develop Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant applications: Othello Hospital, Tacos El Rey, Joyson, Group 14, Simplot, Dohler, Leprekon, and East Wenatchee Water District. We're also exploring upskilling opportunities with Selland Construction and Cascade Medical Center. Incumbent worker training grants help businesses offset the cost and invest in their workforce through skill development.

Professional Development:

We're continuing our commitment to learning and growing. Our next workforce training is scheduled for October 12. Staff will learn how to build employer-aligned partnerships, how to think like a business partner, and how apprenticeships work. This training will help our team strengthen relationships in the community and better serve the customers who come through our doors. Much of the material comes from the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) Business Services Academy, which our staff attended in August. The academy helps staff build the skills to support businesses and employers by providing them with the tools, knowledge, and expertise needed to succeed in the ever-changing landscape of business services.



Consent Agenda

9/29/2026

SUMMARY:

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This consent agenda includes: (Enclosed)

- a. Board Meeting Minutes: June 23, 2026
- b. One Stop Certification Approval (Okanogan, Grant/Adams, Chelan/Douglas)
- c. Policy Update: Complaint Procedure & EcSA Incentives

**SkillSource Regional Workforce Board
Board Meeting Minutes
June 23, 2026
Via Zoom**

Board Chair Tad Hildebrand called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

Director's Report

Lisa summarized the meeting agenda and then presented her report for this quarter. She began with an overview of funding for the upcoming program year. Federal appropriations for WIOA Adult, Dislocated worker, and Youth remained basically unchanged, but Washington's formula share decreased 10%. North Central will see a slight increase of state funding allocation compared to last year but has less carry-in money going into the new year. The FY 2027 federal budget continues to be debated; the House spending proposal that was voted out of committee would drastically cut or eliminate several programs. However, this proposal faces stiff opposition and is unlikely to make it to signed law. Washington State also is expecting significant budget shortfalls in the next biennium and state agencies are being requested to make cuts; EcSA is in particular jeopardy.

Lisa reported on progress on strategic goals as depicted in this quarter's success stories, and shared information about audits and monitoring, organizational performance against federal targets, One-Stop Certification, and the WWA Summit which will take place in Spokane in November.

Lisa concluded her report with a brief summary of budget changes for the new program year. She acknowledged the committees' input on training emphasis for the coming year.

Consent Agenda – Minutes, Budgets

The agenda listed the following items as consent agenda items:

- Approval of the March 19, 2026 board meeting minutes
- Approval of budgets for PY26-27 as recommended by the committees:
 - Executive Budget
 - PY26-27 Executive Budget
 - Okanogan PY26-27 Service Delivery Budget
 - Grant/Adams PY26-27 Service Delivery Budget
 - Chelan/Douglas PY-26-27 Service Delivery Budget

Tad reviewed the consent agenda rules and requested a motion.

Augustine Gallegos moved and Zach Williams seconded to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

Board Certification

Lisa explained that the State Workforce Board is reviewing the twelve LWDBs in the state to certify them. Lisa summarized the certification tool and SkillSource's responses to the questions in the tool. She reported that she anticipates no difficulty in receiving full certification. She outlined how SkillSource meets or exceeds all the functional requirements of a workforce board and is well prepared for future needs.

Economic and Employment Outlook and Update

Aaron explained that the LWDB is obligated to stay informed of economic and labor trends in the area to inform decisions made and meet the needs of the community. Aaron provided information on total population, regional employment, and median earnings; discussed resident demographics and labor force participation; and inflow/outflow of workers to and from communities in North Central. Regional

Unemployment has ticked back upwards to 6.43% as of December, which is higher than in 2021 but lower than 2020. Unemployment is highest among working age persons (25-54), white, non-Latinos and men. Aaron covered industry job numbers, growth and earnings; business size in NCW; occupational density, growth and earnings; and top posted job openings.

In closing, he asked the group three questions: *What's jumping out at you, what surprises you? What makes you think "I need to know more about this"?* and *What's most relevant for your business/organization/ workforce?* Commissioner Timm commented on the need for strategies to retain younger workers; Aaron gave an example of how SkillSource has worked with broadband and utility providers to stand up local pathways for training to fill local jobs. Pablo commented on the high percentage of small businesses in NCW. Lisa commented on the decrease in labor market participation, which Aaron said he interprets as the "bow wave" of baby boomers phasing out of the workforce.

Chair's Choice Activity

Tad refocused the board on topics that have been proposed for a board member track at the WWA Summit. Those ideas are included in the Director's Report in the board packet. Lisa added that board members' costs to attend the WWA Summit will be covered by SkillSource; it offers a great opportunity to cut away and focus on board-related learning.

Lisa informed the board that next year's retreat is being planned; more information is forthcoming and may use those same topics as discussions at the retreat.

The board meeting adjourned at 5:12 pm.

In Attendance:

Ryan Beebout
Maritza Enriquez
Augustine Gallegos
Faimous Harrison
Julie Helligso
Tad Hildebrand
Heidi Huddle
Savannah Knowlton
Brant Mayo
Kyle Niehenke
Irasema Ortiz-Elizalde
Michelle Price
Pablo Villareal
Zach Williams
Todd Wurl

Not In Attendance:

Randy Curry
Crystal Gage
Nate Mack
Anthony Popelier
Lindsy Prows
Sara Thompson Tweedy

Staff in Attendance:

Lisa Romine
Susan Adams
Laura Leavitt
Aaron Parrott
Kelli Martinelli
Heidi Lamers
Toby Haberlock
Christy Mataya
James Beck
Alicia Wallace
Juan Martinez
Lisa Bauer

County Commissioners

Kevin Burgess (Grant County)
Nick Timm (Okanogan County)

One Stop Center Certifications (2026-29)

CONSENT AGENDA | SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

Action Requested

Approve certification of WorkSource Okanogan and WorkSource Central Basin as comprehensive one stop centers, and WorkSource Wenatchee as an affiliate one stop center, for July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029, as recommended by their respective local certification teams.

Process

Federal and State policy calls for certification every three years. Each local team and the One Stop Operator completed the One Stop Site Assessment and Certification Tool, documenting access to required partner programs and performance across seven criteria: service delivery; physical and programmatic accessibility; equal opportunity; outreach and access; customer satisfaction; employer engagement; and staff training. Certification teams of board members, community partners and board staff reviewed the tools, toured the sites, and met with the Operator and local staff for questions about service coordination, customer feedback and employer outreach. All three sub area committees received the results before this full board action.

Results and local team recommendations

Location	Certification findings
Okanogan	All seven criteria met. The team noted strong partner coordination, access to information and customer service, including south county outreach in Brewster and regular use of customer feedback. The local rating team recommends certification.
Central Basin	The team noted strong partner coordination, access to information and customer service, with robust employer outreach and integrated services. An Employer of the Day visit yielded nine on site hires that very day. The local rating team recommends certification.
Wenatchee Affiliate	The team noted partner coordination, accessibility and staff development. Recent co location of Employment Security and SkillSource supports faster referrals and co enrollment; the Learning Center expands youth and education services. The local rating team recommends certification.

Follow up

The board will receive an annual status and continuous improvement report for each certified site, as required by WorkSource System Policy 1016, Revision 2.

SkillSource Regional Workforce Board (WDA 8)

Local Directive Review Summary

September 2026

In accordance with [WorkSource System Policy 1028 revision 2](#) (dated January 30, 2025), the following changes to local directives are being presented to the SkillSource Regional Workforce Board for information and approval.

1. Customer Concern & Complaint Procedure: The following changes to Local One-Stop Guidance 13-09 (Customer Concern & Complaint Procedure) are proposed, resulting in Revision 3. Aligns with [State Policy 1012 Rev 4](#) and [Procedure Handbook](#).

a) **Add additional programs as required by WS Policy 1012 Rev 4.**

The revision approved by the board in March directs the addition of several federal programs. WorkSource Policy 1012 Revision 4 directed the further addition of state funded programs (State Economic Security for All, Community Reinvestment Program) to the complaint procedures.

b) **Add local EO Officer to discrimination complaint forms.**

Currently LOG 13-09 Rev 2 references the state EO discrimination complaint forms. The state EO office recommended creating a local version which adds local EO officer contact information to the form.

2. State Economic Security for All (EcSA) incentives. The following changes to Local Directive 22-179 (Incentive Payments for State Funded EcSA Participants) are proposed, resulting in Revision 5. Aligns with [State Program Policy 7000](#).

a) **Replace data entry instructions with updated procedures.** The current directive explains how to enter State EcSA incentive services into the old MIS, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO). The proposed change will replace these instructions with the new workflow for the new state MIS, WA Works.

Board of Directors Presentation

SkillSource AI Use Policy & Framework 2.0

September 2026

What Our AI Policy Covers

SkillSource

SkillSource AI Use Policy & Framework 2.0 — A Responsible Approach

Responsible Use

Clear expectations for how staff use AI tools — protecting client confidentiality, data privacy, and professional judgment.

Data & Privacy

No PII or client data in any AI tool — including enterprise tools like MS Copilot — without explicit approval.

Governance & Oversight

Designated AI Leadership Team vets all new tools. A structured process for approvals, reporting, and policy updates.

Training & Proficiency

All staff complete foundational AI literacy training. Ongoing sessions build practical skills throughout the year.

2027 Regional Workforce Plan Two-Year Update

Synthesis of Sub-Area Committee Feedback — Grant/Adams, Chelan/Douglas & Okanogan (September 2026)

Committee Feedback: What's Changed Since 2024

Economic pressure on traditional industries

- **Okanogan:** Agriculture, timber, and tourism are being squeezed by tariffs, political decisions, wildfire, and rising input costs. **Grant/Adams:** potato/wheat/wine headwinds, diesel costs, a food processor pivoting product lines, and the Lamb Weston strike. **Chelan/Douglas:** labor costs (work visas, adverse wage rates) pushing tree-fruit growers into the red, farm closures, and rising insurance costs forcing smaller firms to drop coverage in fire-prone areas.

Data centers, clean energy, and tech keep growing — but face real constraints

- All three committees cited continued data center investment (Sabey, Quincy as a model for community integration) and anticipated clean-energy growth in 3–5 years. **Power and water capacity** are recurring constraints, and local leaders want help combating **public misinformation** about AI/data centers to sustain community and regulatory support.

Workforce shortages concentrated in specific sectors

- Care economy/healthcare workforce is the most consistent gap: Okanogan flagged shortages of physicians, veterinarians, specialized healthcare (naturopathic, women's health), and childcare; Grant/Adams and Chelan/Douglas both raised care/health pathway growth. Skilled trades (plumbers), municipal/public works (retiring workforce, certification gaps), and pre-apprenticeship pipelines for trades were also repeated themes.

AI adoption is real but uneven, and perception matters

- Employers are already using AI operationally (ag monitoring/automation, in-house AI systems, AI scheduling and call-screening in caregiving), while Employment Security described internal AI adoption headwinds and negative public perception. Multiple members compared AI literacy to a now-basic workplace skill, on par with email or Office proficiency. SkillSource's forthcoming AI usage policy was noted in two of the three meetings as a direct, timely response.

Persistent structural barriers and emerging populations

- Transportation, housing, childcare (including regulatory barriers to new providers), and rising insurance costs remain barriers to participation. HR1 SNAP/Medicaid work-requirement changes are expected to increase service demand. Remote-work readiness for youth was raised in Okanogan as a county retention strategy; DVR reported improved counselor retention but declining participant outcomes and reduced federal support.

Alignment with DOL's Five Pillars

Pillar	What Committees Said
1. Industry-Driven Strategies	Strong employer-shaped input: data center growth (Sabey, Quincy model), ag-tech partnerships (Stemilt/Yamaha sprayer project), interest in pre-apprenticeship pipelines for trades and municipal/public works, continued healthcare & veterinary apprenticeship pathways.
2. Worker Mobility	Workforce Pell's mixed effects (more completers, but risk of credential oversaturation); care-economy career pathway and perception barriers; DVR clients seeing fewer/lower-paying outcomes; youth remote-work readiness as a county retention strategy.

3. Integrated Systems	Cross-regional coordination for data center; community college coordination; childcare regulatory and transportation barriers requiring multi-partner solutions; HR1 SNAP/Medicaid work-requirement changes driving new referral volume.
4. Accountability	Maintain a culture of continuous improvement, addressing shortfalls in outcomes promptly; SkillSource and North Central already excels in this aspect
5. Flexibility & Innovation	Uneven but accelerating AI adoption (ag monitoring/automation, in-house AI systems, AI scheduling/call-screening in caregiving) alongside public skepticism and workforce anxiety; SkillSource's forthcoming AI usage policy is a direct response.

Implications for the 4-Year Plan Update

- **Regional Analysis:** Refresh the economic narrative to reflect tariff, labor-cost, insurance, and wildfire pressure on agriculture/timber/tourism, alongside sustained data center and clean-energy investment and its power/water constraints.
- **Sector Strategies:** Continue the existing tech and healthcare-support sector partnerships (Section II); consider whether care-economy/behavioral health workforce development and a clean-energy pathway warrant expanded or new sector-strategy treatment given the volume of committee feedback.
- **Career Pathways & Apprenticeship (Goal One, Obj. 1.4/1.5):** Expand pre-apprenticeship activity with K-12 partners for trades and municipal/public works, and note interest in veterinary/healthcare specialty and public-sector pathways.
- **Technology & AI:** Incorporate the new SkillSource AI usage policy and reflect AI literacy as a baseline workforce skill in training and career-navigation strategies; address staff-facing AI adoption support at partner agencies.
- **Performance & Accountability:** Add improvement strategies for outcomes consistent with the update's required performance review; monitor effects of increased client load due to SNAP and Medicaid work requirements
- **Support Services & Priority Populations:** Reaffirm transportation, housing, and childcare strategies with added attention to childcare regulatory barriers and insurance-driven cost pressures; prepare service strategies for increased HR1-driven demand.
- **Cross-Regional & Economic Development Coordination:** Address coordination for data center growth extending throughout North Central and combined strategies for meeting workforce needs regionwide.

Note: This synthesis was composed with assistance from Anthropic's Claude AI based on SWRB September subcommittee meeting minutes, the current 2024–2028 plan and DOL 5-Pillars framework. It does not include full-board discussion or written public comment, which may surface additional themes.

Enclosures

- PY26-27 Meeting Schedule
- Board Roster
- Financial Statements Year End
- Combined Success Stories
- Sub-Area Committee Reports

SkillSource Regional Workforce Board

2026-27 Meeting Calendar

June 2026	8	Okanogan Committee
	9	Grant/Adams Committee
	10	Chelan/Douglas Committee
	23	Board Meeting Time – 4PM – via Zoom
September 2026	14	Okanogan Committee
	15	Grant/Adams Committee
	16	Chelan/Douglas Committee
	29	Board Meeting - Time 4PM – via Zoom
November 2025	16	Okanogan Committee
	17	Grant/Adams Committee
	18	Chelan/Douglas Committee
December	01	Board Meeting - Time 4PM – via Zoom
March 2027	1	Okanogan Committee
	2	Grant/Adams Committee
	3	Chelan/Douglas Committee
11-12		Board Meeting & Retreat: Thurs eve – Friday (ending @ 3pm) Location: Sleeping Lady Resort, Leavenworth Date TBD: National Association of Workforce Board Conference
June 2027	7	Okanogan Committee
	8	Grant/Adams Committee
	9	Chelan/Douglas Committee
	22	Board Meeting Time - TBD – via Zoom

Committee Meetings: Noon – 1:30PM and include lunch – in person (remote available on request)
Board Meetings: **4:PM – 5:30PM VIA ZOOM (NEW TIME)**

SkillSource Regional Board Membership Composition

This roster conforms to WIOA section 107(b)(2) Local Workforce Development Board Membership Composition. The information informs the Governor for certification under WIOA Section 107(c)(2).

Required categories	Name/Title/Organization	Nominated by	Year Appt	Term Expires
Business (51% minimum)				Dec 31
1. Business	Crystal Gage/ Practice Manager/ Omak Clinic	OK Economic Alliance	2019	2026
2. Business	Anthony Popelier / HR Dir/ Reman Reload	OK Economic Alliance	2023	2027
3. Business	Savannah Knowlton / Owner/ Welcome Home Care	OK Economic Alliance	2026	2028
4. Business	Lindsay Prows / Owner/ Johnson's Glass	Othello Chamber	2026	2028
5. Business	Tad Hildebrand / Consultant / Pilot Rock Cons	Adams Co Dev Council	2017	2026
6. Business	Maritza Enriquez / HR / Joyson Safety Systems	Grant Co EDC	2026	2028
7. Business	Brant Mayo/Executive Dir/Grant Co EDC	Grant Co EDC	2018	2026
8. Business	Ryan Beebout/ VP/ Sabey Data Centers	Wenatchee Chamber	2023	2027
9. Business	Heidi Huddle / Owner/ All State Insurance	Wenatchee Chamber	2026	2028
10. Business	Julie Helligso /Exec Director/ Cascade Vet	Wenatchee Chamber	2023	2027
11. Business	Zach Williams /HR Manager/ Stemilt Growers	Wenatchee Chamber	2021	2028
Workforce/Labor (20% minimum)				
1. Labor	Nathan Mack/ Field Representative/LiUNA 348	Central Labor Council	2023	2027
2. Other workforce	Michelle Price/ Superintendent /NC ESD	North Central ESD	2009	2028
3. Other workforce	Irasema Ortiz-Elizalde/ Administrator/ DSHS	DSHS	2013	2026
4. Labor	Augustine Gallegos / Bus Agent / Teamsters	Central Labor Council	2021	2026
5. Labor/Apprentice	Randy Curry / President /IBEW #191	Central Labor Council	2021	2026
Education				
1. Title II Adult Ed	Sara Thompson-Tweedy/ President / BBCC	Big Bend Comm College	2021	2028
2. Workforce Ed	Faimous Harrison / President / WVC	Wenatchee Valley College	2023	2027
Public				
1. Wagner-Peyser	Todd Wurl/ Regional Director/ ESD	Employment Sec Dept	2023	2026
2. Vocational Rehab	Pablo Villarreal/ Acting Regional Director/ DVR	Div. Vocational Rehab	2019	2026
3. Econ Dev	Kyle Niehenke/ Ex. Dir/ Adams County Dev Council	Adams Co Dev. Council	2023	2026

Rev: 04/2026

Okanogan	Chelan/Douglas	Grant/Adams
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Current Industries Represented:

- Agriculture
- Healthcare
- Professional Svcs
- Econ. Dev.
- Technology
- Care Economy
- Manufacturing
- Construction/ Skilled Trades

SkillSource
Statement of Financial Position

	6/30/2026	6/30/2025
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,558,654.06	1,716,901.48
Trade Receivables	438,318.00	773,944.09
Due from Government	145,091.04	325,294.23
Other Receivables	11,827.30	6,652.53
Prepaid Expenses, current portion	58,579.69	84,756.96
Total Current Assets	3,212,470.09	2,907,549.29
Property and Equipment		
Land	813,350.61	813,350.61
Land Improvements	724,495.59	724,495.59
Building and Equipment	4,970,094.61	4,970,094.61
Construction in Process	50,179.47	0.00
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(3,431,031.26)	(3,271,120.97)
Total Property and Equipment	3,127,089.02	3,236,819.84
Other Assets		
Restricted Cash	472,306.12	850,445.51
PrePaid Expense, net of current portion	7,702.86	10,968.62
Total Other Assets	480,008.98	861,414.13
Total Assets	6,819,568.09	7,005,783.26
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt	65,959.81	63,298.80
Accounts Payable	468,883.78	939,529.53
Accrued Wages and Benefits	15,669.63	15,747.54
Accrued Vacation	140,988.27	171,257.79
Accrued Interest	2,427.09	2,533.33
Total Current Liabilities	693,928.58	1,192,366.99
Long-Term Debt payable after one year		
Long-term debt payable after one year	2,081,521.46	2,147,610.31
Total Liabilities	2,775,450.04	3,339,977.30
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	4,044,118.05	3,665,805.96
Total Net Assets	4,044,118.05	3,665,805.96
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	6,819,568.09	7,005,783.26

10 - Executive

7-1-25 thru 6-30-26

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Budget</u>	
Expenditures			
Salaries			
Salaries & Benefits	1,030,935	1,078,846	96%
Travel	20,880	29,950	70%
Miscellaneous	178,719	157,942	113%
Supplies	12,497	26,154	48%
Equipment	3,716	7,000	53%
Facilities	32,100	35,898	89%
Communication	9,782	8,480	115%
Training	38,272	83,000	46%
By & For Subcontracts	25,000	25,000	100%
Small Business Grants*	<u>87,235</u>	<u>43,000</u>	203%
Total Executive	<u>1,439,137</u>	<u>1,495,270</u>	96%

* Small Business Grants the full two year amount on the grant was spent in first year.

20 - Chelan/Douglas

7-1-25 thru 6-30-26	Total	Budget	Expenditure Rate
Expenditures			
Training related expenditures			
Salaries & Benefits	899,410	941,285	96%
OneStop Operator	15,424	14,000	110%
Travel	2,451	5,400	45%
Miscellaneous	52,209	37,533	139%
Supplies	35,401	36,667	97%
Equipment	445	10,000	4%
Facilities	74,994	85,636	88%
Communication	6,611	8,606	77%
Training	<u>1,571</u>	<u>5,000</u>	31%
Total Training Related	1,088,517	1,144,127	95%
Direct Training			
Incumbent Worker	23,060	30,000	77%
On the Job Training	41,462	90,357	46%
Participant Wages	122,900	156,187	79%
Institutional Training	112,294	132,941	84%
Basic Skills Training	463,866	490,182	95%
Support services			
Prevoc Other	1,674		
GED Fees	7,084		
Incentives	55,625		
Child Care	6,000		
Housing	6,977		
Transportation	3,771		
Car Repair	757		
Supportive Services Other	<u>14,661</u>		
Total Support services	<u>96,548</u>	<u>147,102</u>	66%
Total Direct Training	<u>860,131</u>	<u>1,046,769</u>	82%
Total Expenditures	<u><u>1,948,647</u></u>	<u><u>2,190,896</u></u>	89%

30 - Grant/Adams

7-1-25 thru 06-30-25	Total	Budget	Expenditure Rate
Expenditures			
Training related			
Salaries & Benefits	855,644	870,098	98%
OneStop Operator	30,849	28,000	110%
Travel	16,039	19,100	84%
Miscellaneous	49,846	44,985	111%
Supplies	15,662	35,242	44%
Equipment	2,096	10,000	21%
Facilities	73,830	77,301	96%
Communication	8,207	7,348	112%
Training	2,298	5,000	46%
Total Training	1,054,470	1,097,074	96%
Direct Training			
Incumbent Worker	29,793	30,000	99%
On the Job Training	41,712	159,859	26%
Participant Wages	136,901	180,261	76%
Institutional Training	263,234	293,000	90%
Basic Skills Training	238,807	232,586	103%
Support services			
GED FEES	4,092		
Prevoc Other	314		
Incentives	71,950		
Housing	7,825		
Transportation	15,646		
Car Repair	4,651		
Supportive	10,120		
Total Support	114,598	120,469	95%
Total Direct Training	825,045	1,016,175	81%
Total Expenditures	1,879,515	2,113,249	89%

50 - Okanogan

7-1-25 thru 6-30-26	Total	Budget	Expenditure Rate
Expenditures			
Training related expenditures			
OneStop Operator	30,849	28,000	110%
Subrecipient Program	493,520	532,389	93%
Subrecipient Indirect	74,592	93,917	79%
Total Training related	598,961	654,306	92%
Direct Training			
Incumbent Worker	11,663	15,000	78%
On the Job Training	37,635	51,745	73%
Participant Wages	77,829	52,414	148%
Institutional Training	101,926	108,833	94%
Basic Skills Training	182,136	142,102	128%
Support services			
GED FEES	2,850		
Prevocational	1,394		
Incentives	31,525		
Housing	1,850		
Transportation	10,273		
Car Repair			
Supportive Services Other	5,797		
Total Support services	54,689	55,766	98%
Total Direct Training	465,879	425,860	109%
Total Expenditures	1,064,840	1,080,166	99%



North Central Workforce Development Area
Quarterly Success Stories
September 2026

Training, Tools, Timing: How a Nespelem Neighborhood was Saved From Fire

A fire line is a barrier cleared of vegetation to help stop a wildfire from spreading. Large equipment can clear paths up to a point, but when fire moves into neighborhood gullies and close to homes, smaller, more nimble equipment becomes critical.

Corby Turner, owner/operator of Four Bearz Contracting in Nespelem, had recently purchased a skid steer with support from a Community Reinvestment grant through SkillSource. It was ready when a wildfire raced across the grassy hills and threatened Corby's home and those of several family members.

Nearby homes and buildings had already been lost. Corby could hear cars exploding in the distance. "It felt like a war zone," he said. Along with his brother, Ranford Sanchez, Corby used the skid steer to dig additional fire lines, trim low branches, and remove combustible material just feet from the back fence of a home where a grandmother cares for her grandchildren. When a firetruck determined the terrain was not suitable for its equipment and pulled back, Corby, Ranford, their crew, and neighbors dug in.

Today, there is a distinct line showing exactly where the fire stopped. The tips of a ponderosa pine are crisp and blackened on one side, while branches on the other remain green. Beyond it, at least 13 homes still stand.

A \$15,000 business investment grant through SkillSource, funded by the Washington State Department of Commerce, helped Four Bearz purchase the skid steer, a dump truck, and other essential equipment. That investment is also helping the company prepare for the future through training and on-the-job learning. "Our training program serves our community members and gives young adults and youth the opportunity at gaining experience at building trades," Corby said—building skills and knowledge that will continue to serve Nespelem and surrounding Okanogan County.

Sometimes the return on an investment takes months or years to be realized. In this case, the return was immediate: an entire neighborhood still standing.



Okanogan

Flooding the Stage for Super Mom: A New Nurse for the Valley

When Sonia Casillas Villaseñor walked to the center of the stage at the Nurse Pinning Ceremony at Wenatchee Valley College, her whole family came with her. These were the people who stepped in to cover meals and school pickups while Sonia was immersed in the intensity of nursing school. When financial incentives for training were cut short, Sonia shared, “I was able to push through and continue because of my family. And I know not everyone has that ... I feel really lucky.”

Sonia has long had a heart for healthcare. She has worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for Confluence Health since 2015, taking coursework part-time until she earned a spot in the Associate Degree Nursing Program at WVC. Full-time nursing school leaves little room for employment, and the cost of day-to-day living on top of tuition and training expenses can derail even dedicated students. Career training incentives through Economic Security for All (EcSA) are designed to help close that gap. Referred to SkillSource by Wenatchee Valley College, Sonia received training incentives that allowed her to reduce her working hours at Confluence Health and focus on coursework and clinicals.



In Sonia's second year, those incentives were cut in half due to funding restrictions. But her resolve—and her support system—continued at full steam. Through it all, Sonia landed on the Dean's List quarter after quarter. Her SkillSource career trainer, Heidi Lamers, said, “I have been inspired by Sonia's dedication to completing the rigorous nursing program, all while continuing to work, navigating some significant family and financial challenges, and always remaining strong and steadfast through it all.”

Sonia is a Super Mom to five children and a first-generation graduate. Walking through the brightly lit halls of Confluence Hospital, she reflected, “As a first-generation graduate, mother, and healthcare worker, this journey represents more than personal success, it represents hope and opportunity for my family and community.”

Congratulations to Sonia and her family, to Confluence Health, and to the Wenatchee community. A new nurse for the valley is cause for celebration!

Chelan/Douglas

From Housekeeping to Human Resources

Othello Community Hospital is growing—a new surgeon and 20 new employees in a single year. Pun intended, that's healthy growth! But growth also creates new demands for the people who support the hospital's workforce. For a small rural hospital, the Human Resources team had a lot to carry, and only one person to carry it.

SkillSource's Business Solutions team had recently introduced HR Director Mindy Gonzalez to training resources available through SkillSource, including On-the-Job Training (OJT), which helps employers hire and develop workers for the specific skills a position requires.

Jazmin Arceno had spent three years in housekeeping at the hospital. She knew the facility, the staff, and the culture, but was earning a wage that was unsustainable for her family and was ready for the next step in her career. When Mindy and hospital CEO Connie Agenbroad decided to add an HR Assistant, Jazmin applied, interviewed, and was hired—with OJT providing a structured way to develop the skills she needed for the new role. Working with SkillSource Career & Training Specialist Jackie Wilhelm, the hospital developed an OJT contract around the actual demands of the job.

Jazmin now helps onboard new hires, administer benefits enrollment, and manage FMLA documentation. “I have developed record-keeping skills by maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee files for both new and current employees,” she said. Jazmin is enthusiastic about her new role, and the relief from her supervisor, Mindy, is evident as she coaches Jazmin through her training.



For the hospital, OJT reduced the cost and risk of training while helping build a culture where advancement from within is possible. For Jazmin, it meant a wage increase and a move from housekeeping into a professional role where she continues to learn and grow while serving her community.

A community hospital adding staff is a promising sign for Othello. Having someone in place to support that growth—and a workforce system that helped put her there—is what makes it sustainable. Congratulations to Othello Community Hospital and its newly expanded HR team!

Grant/Adams

Okanogan Committee Meeting
September 14th, 2026
WorkSource Okanogan, Omak, WA

4

Present: Savannah Knowlton, Anthony Popelier, Pablo Villareal
Staff: Lisa Romine, Susan Adams, Aaron Parrott, Juan Martinez

Introduction, Welcome and Updates

Lisa greeted the board members, guests and staff present, and summarized the agenda.

Announcements and Upcoming Events:

- **Poverty Simulation September 17th:** Lisa Bauer is coordinating a poverty simulation in partnership with FYRE and Okanogan Community Action on Thursday at the Stampede Pavilion. Participants will be assigned roles as low-income individuals or families and will navigate a series of drawn-from-life challenges.
- **Fall Career Events:** The College & Career Fair will take place this fall at the Agriplex.
- **WWA Summit (Nov. 4-5, Spokane):** Lisa invited board members to attend the 2026 WWA Summit. The schedule includes concurrent sessions aimed at board members. SkillSource will pay registration and all travel expenses.
- **Board Retreat (Mar. 11-12, Leavenworth):** The retreat will be held at Sleeping Lady. Thursday will include an opening session and dinner and Friday will be an all-day session including the board meeting to wrap up by 3:30.

Current Initiatives

- **Best Practices Requests – State & National:** SkillSource has received multiple requests to present at various meetings and conferences recently, including the National Youth Employment Coalition, the State Workforce Board, and others.
- **HR1 Impacts: SNAP & Medicaid Work Requirements:** Lisa explained the impacts of HR1 on SNAP and Medicaid recipients, including effective dates, new requirements, and impacts if these requirements are not met. These changes are expected to increase the number of individuals seeking access to services at our centers. The intent is to quickly connect them to meaningful qualifying activities and document them without creating additional administrative barriers. Lisa presented statistics showing the number of SNAP and Medicaid recipients in the NCW. Savannah said that her business's clientele is mostly older than the work requirement window, but it is affecting her employees; many are switching to her company's healthcare insurance plan. Pablo wondered how many of those SNAP recipients in the statistics are disabled, and would be exempted from the work requirements. He also talked about how DVR works with individuals to counsel them on disability documentation and avoiding the benefit cliff.
- **One Stop Operator Solicitation:** SkillSource has opened a Request for Proposals as of last week. The current Operator is the consortium including OIC of Washington, Employment Security and SkillSource; their contract ends on December 31.
- **Performance Report:** This quarter's success story documents how Four Bearz Contracting used its Community reinvestment small business grant to purchase heavy equipment which was critical to saving a local neighborhood from wildfires. The year-end performance numbers are largely above target, with one exception in WIOA Adult credential rate; Omak was 99% expended against budget and reached 74% of budget for work-based learning.

One Stop Certification Results

Lisa summarized the One Stop Certification process and center tour on August 19th. During the tour, the partners explained how they coordinated delivery of services. The certification team recommended certification through June 2029 and the certification will be approved at the board meeting. The One-Stop team is required to report to the board at least annually and is scheduled for March committee meetings. Anthony commended the staff for a great certification tour.

Strategic Plan 2 Year Update

The strategic plan is published every four years, and is required to be updated at the two-year mark. Aaron explained what is expected to be updated and led the group in a discussion on changes to the economy and training landscape since the plan was published in 2024.

Anthony said that the most significant changes have resulted from political decisions and related how day-to-day economic changes have caused significant turmoil in his industry. Even harvesting standing timber has become a difficult issue. The impacts of wildfire on both sides of the border is likely to impact his industry as well. Processing wildfire burn areas for salvage takes extra time and manpower to assess remaining timber. He said that Reman-Reload has managed to stay stable on number of employees because the final products must be sold in the US to avoid tariffs, but while production in Oroville needs to stay maximized to maintain employment, undamaged timber is more scarce. He also mentioned that tourism has taken a big hit in the last 2 years, mainly due to politics.

Savannah said that since Welcome Home Care started two years ago, assessing change is challenging. WHC is growing and will have capacity to certify its employees in Wenatchee and Omak. She said that the available workforce is the most challenging area, partially because caregiving as an industry and profession can be viewed unfavorably. She cited core characteristics (values, work ethic, and reliability) as a key barrier to employment, and inferred that this gap applied to the wider care economy industries.

Pablo contributed that DVR's counselor retention has improved. Counselors from different backgrounds have found themselves at DVR as other counseling organizations have closed. DVR remains one of the smallest divisions in DSHS; counselor pay is not keeping pace with other classifications despite a higher educational requirement, and training to proficiency is a long process. He also observed that DVR participants are getting fewer higher-paying jobs, and fewer employment outcomes at any level. He also noted the reduction of federal support structures for employment services for individuals with disabilities.

When asked about emerging workforce needs, occupations, industries, or populations that deserve greater attention, Anthony described shortages of younger doctors and medical professionals, as well as veterinarians. He also said journeymen plumbers are in short supply in Okanogan County. Savannah agreed and amplified that specialized healthcare providers, such as naturopathic care and women's health. She also spoke to local needs for childcare and preschool. Her husband works for the city and has mentioned gaps in certification for municipal works. Pablo agreed with that assessment, saying that many public works employees are retiring in the county. Juan added that after COVID, telework was a hot topic but has lagged behind in employment in Okanogan; he thinks that there is untapped potential. He also spoke to Commissioner Timm's priority to attract young adults back to Okanogan County by equipping them to work remotely.

Anthony spoke to the persistent barriers to employment and prosperity in Okanogan County, giving as an example transportation, which prices out working families and cuts into profit margins for businesses. He also spoke to childcare and housing challenges in Okanogan. He cited regulatory barriers to establishing childcare. Lisa responded that this is a longstanding issue that has always been a significant obstacle. Susan wondered about the impacts of AI in the workforce; Anthony replied that increasing automation is always part of the plan as workforces shrink. Savannah said that WHC uses AI for scheduling and is implementing AI call agents for screening after-hours calls. She noted that attitudes to AI integration have been receptive in her company. She discussed emerging uses of AI in the care industry, leading to new training needs.

Lisa reminded the group that the full board meeting will be held at 4 PM on September 29th via Zoom. This Friday, Anthony and Ryan Beebout will be featured on Common Thread at 11am. Join us!

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 PM.

Grant/Adams Committee Meeting

September 15, 2026

5

WorkSource Central Basin

Moses Lake, WA

Present: Augustine Gallegos, Todd Wurl, Brant Mayo, Kyle Niehenke, Sara Thompson Tweedy; Maritza Enriquez (via Zoom)

Staff: Lisa Romine, Susan Adams, Aaron Parrott, James Beck, Alicia Wallace, Mayra Eaton-Garcia

Introduction

Lisa welcomed the board members and staff present, and summarized the agenda.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

- **Fall Hiring Events:** October 2nd at the WorkSource Center.
- **WWA Summit (Nov. 4-5, Spokane):** Lisa invited board members to attend the 2026 WWA Summit. The schedule includes concurrent sessions aimed at board members. SkillSource will pay registration and travel expenses.
- **Board Retreat (Mar. 11-12, Leavenworth):** The retreat will be held at Sleeping Lady. Thursday will include an opening session and dinner and Friday will be an all-day session including the board meeting. Study up for Workforce Jeopardy!
- **Common Thread:** Friday, September 18th at 11 AM, Common Thread will feature board members Anthony Popelier (Oroville Reman-Reload) and Ryan Beebout (Sabey Data Centers).

Current Initiatives

- **Best Practices Requests – State and National:** SkillSource has received multiple requests to present at various meetings and conferences recently, including the State Rehabilitation Council, the National Youth Employment Coalition, the State Workforce Board, and others. This not only educates stakeholders at all levels but also showcases the work that SkillSource makes possible.
- **Grant County Jail RESET Expansion:** Lisa made a request to DOL and South Central Workforce to expand the RESET re-entry activities program to include the new Grant County Jail in Ephrata. She and staff met with Grant County leadership to work on a memorandum of understanding, and hope to partner with Big Bend and NCW Tech Alliance to offer services. Sara mentioned Oxford House as another potential partner in this work.
- **BFET (Basic Food Employment & Training) Expansion:** SkillSource was invited to submit an application for BFET funding, to assist service delivery for SNAP recipients. Approval is still pending, but this program would generate revenue for self-sustaining operations. This pilot would focus on placing youth into work based learning, expanding current offerings.
- **HR1 Impacts - SNAP & Medicaid Work Requirements:** Lisa explained the impacts of HR1 on SNAP and Medicaid recipients, including effective dates, new requirements, and impacts if these requirements are not met. These changes are expected to increase the number of individuals seeking access to services at our centers. The intent is to quickly connect them to meaningful qualifying activities and document them without creating additional administrative barriers. Lisa presented statistics showing the number of SNAP and Medicaid recipients in the NCW. This is one rationale for WWA requesting the 10% Governor's WIOA discretionary funding be passed to the local workforce boards.

- **One Stop Operator Solicitation:** SkillSource has opened a Request for Proposals as of last week. The current Operator is the consortium including OIC of Washington, Employment Security and SkillSource; their contract ends on December 31.

One-Stop Certification Report

Lisa reported that the One Stop Centers completed their certification requirements this year, as required every three years. The certification team toured WorkSource Central Basin on August 20th. Brant said that the tour should be offered for all new board members; Lisa replied that next time we'll work to incorporate the certification tours into the committee meetings. The certification team recommended certification of WorkSource Central Basin to the board.

Strategic Plan 2 Year Update

The strategic plan is published every four years, and is required to be updated at the two-year mark. Aaron explained what is expected to be updated, introduced some framing concepts, and led the group in a discussion on changes to the economy and training landscape since the plan was published in 2024.

Susan recounted conversation with Anthony Popelier on the impacts of tariffs, wildfires, and loss of tourism in Okanogan County the previous day. Kyle said that agriculture is being reduced both intentionally and unintentionally as a key industry in North Central and the state, with multiple factors impacting all sides of the industry and no viable long-term solutions. This strikes at regional identity and generational occupational patterns, and remains a challenging conversation with local employers. Kyle spoke about the headwinds facing local signature products like potatoes, wheat, and wine, including changing national tastes. Maritza added that the rising cost of diesel is causing effects to be felt across the supply chain. On the other hand, she still sees a lot of young locals who want to continue in the family farming business.

Brant said that power and water resource scarcity have slowed industrial growth but expects a boom in clean energy in three to five years, which will create an acute need for new types of employees and skills. He also predicted the continued growth of data centers and AI, and held up Quincy as a successful case of data center placement done right. He thinks that examples like Quincy can help decision makers come over to support data center expansion with regulation that helps responsible growth. Kyle agreed that Grant and Adams counties are ideally situated to host this growth, and offers solutions for dissolving agricultural businesses. The group briefly discussed new energy sources such as fusion, small modular reactors, solar and battery storage.

Augustine commented on how some food processors are pivoting their product offerings from potatoes to powdered milk. He commented that the economic pressures Kyle mentioned are keenly felt by employees, referring to the current workers' strike at Lamb Weston.

Sara spoke to how educational institutions are adapting by offering both new programs to meet regional needs (like the behavioral health BAS) and expanding into new workforce niches such as data center pathways. She spoke to cross-regional strategies to support data center expansion outside of Big Bend's service area and implications for the notion of community and technical college consolidation. She also spoke to the positives of Workforce Pell (more students attending, retaining, completing and moving into skilled careers) as well as potential shortcomings (the reduction of higher education into mass production of lower-skilled workers moving into a newly saturated labor market for those jobs).

Todd spoke to how Employment Security is trying to gain confidence with AI to assist customers, but is facing headwinds with its own AI use internally. He also spoke to the negative connotation AI is receiving in the public view. Lisa made note of SkillSource's AI policy which will be previewed at the full board meeting.

Board Meeting & Recognition Banquet

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM. The full board meeting will be on Tuesday, September 29 at 4 PM via Zoom.

Chelan/Douglas Committee Meeting

September 16, 2026

SkillSource, Wenatchee, WA

6

Present: Nate Mack, Zach Williams, Heidi Huddle, Ryan Beebout

Staff: Lisa Romine, Susan Adams, Laura Leavitt, Aaron Parrott, Mayra Eaton-Garcia, Heidi Lamers, Toby Haberlock

Introduction and Updates

Lisa greeted those in attendance and summarized the agenda.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

- **Fall Hiring Events:** Harvest Hustle, October 16 at WVC. 15 employers are confirmed with more expected.
- **WWA Summit (Nov. 4-5, Spokane):** Lisa invited board members to attend the 2026 WWA Summit. The schedule includes concurrent sessions aimed at board members. SkillSource will pay registration and travel expenses.
- **Board Retreat (Mar. 11-12, Leavenworth):** The retreat will be held at Sleeping Lady. Thursday will include an opening session and dinner and Friday will be an all-day session including the board meeting.
- **Common Thread:** Friday, September 18th at 11 AM, Common Thread will feature board members Anthony Popelier (Oroville Reman-Reload) and Ryan Beebout (Sabey Data Systems).

Current Initiatives

- **Best Practices Requests – State and National:** SkillSource has received multiple requests to present at various meetings and conferences recently, including the State Rehabilitation Council, the National Youth Employment Coalition, the State Workforce Board, and others. This not only educates stakeholders at all levels but also showcases the work that SkillSource makes possible.
- **Re-Entry Expansion:** SkillSource has partnered with CAFÉ and Lighthouse to expand re-entry services in Chelan and Douglas Counties. This effort will come alongside the RESET grant project working with Chelan County Jail inmates.
- **HR1 Impacts - SNAP & Medicaid Work Requirements:** Lisa explained the impacts of HR1 on SNAP and Medicaid recipients, including effective dates, new requirements, and impacts if these requirements are not met. These changes are expected to increase the number of individuals seeking access to services at our centers. The intent is to quickly connect them to meaningful qualifying activities and document them without creating additional administrative barriers. Lisa presented statistics showing the number of SNAP and Medicaid recipients in the NCW. This is one rationale for WWA requesting the 10% Governor's WIOA discretionary funding be passed to the local workforce boards.
- **One Stop Operator Solicitation:** SkillSource has opened a Request for Proposals as of last week. The current Operator is the consortium including OIC of Washington, Employment Security and SkillSource; their contract ends on December 31.
- **AI Usage Policy Development:** SkillSource staff have drafted an AI use policy that gives specific guidance on how and when to use AI. Highlights of the policy will be presented to the full board at the upcoming meeting. SkillSource is one of the first workforce boards in the state to draft an AI usage policy.

One-Stop Certification Report

Lisa reported that the One Stop Centers completed their certification requirements this year, as required every three years. The certification team toured WorkSource Wenatchee in its new location in the SkillSource Career Center on August 21st. The certification team recommended certification of WorkSource Wenatchee to the board. Heidi Huddle remarked on how much is going on in the center at all times, including the Learning Center upstairs and Nate Mack appreciated participating on the rating team.

Strategic Plan 2 Year Update

The strategic plan is published every four years, and is required to be updated at the two-year mark. Aaron explained what is expected to be updated, introduced some framing concepts, and led the group in a discussion on changes to the economy and training landscape since the plan was published in 2024.

In prompting conversation around economic and industry changes, Susan prompted the conversation by sharing Anthony Popelier's testimony on how tariffs and decreasing tourism have affected Okanogan County and his business; and Kyle Niehenke making a connection between weight loss drugs, diet trends and the decline of potato farming in Adams County.

Zach Williams said that the rising cost of labor (including the cost of work visas and wage requirements) is running tree fruit growers in the red before they even purchase fuel for operations. He cited the many grower closures throughout the region, with farms closing and unable to be sold. Revenue has not risen at the same rate. DOL has revisited the calculation of adverse wages, which would provide some relief; however, if that wage rate is reversed, it is uncertain if back pay might be due. He also mentioned the high cost of fertilizer and fuel. However, this year's yield is high quality, prices are at a good level and the workforce is looking strong.

Heidi Huddle noted that the cost of everything is affecting insurance and those costs must be passed to consumers. She also noted that smaller companies are dropping insurance in high fire risk areas because they can't cover catastrophic losses year over year. Rates continue to increase. On the employment side, applications have slowed compared to previous years.

Nate Mack noted that the drawn out state budgeting process has affected union members who are waiting on public projects to be funded. However, private work (such as data center construction) has continued apace due to resource availability. He said that this is not the same situation on the west side and in Spokane; workers from those areas have sought work in the center of the state.

Ryan Beebout offered that data centers continue to do well; he also noted that Sabey hires locally, resulting in local tax revenue. Demand remains high from all sectors, but AI is a small portion of that demand currently. Sabey conservatively manages their customers to avoid high-risk contracts. Power capacity has become an obstacle to continued growth. Sabey has purchased property in East Wenatchee and Malaga. He pointed to Quincy as a model of how to correctly integrate data centers into a community. He also spoke to the misinformation surrounding AI in the media and projected growth at all three locations in NCW. There has been no issue finding qualified applicants for positions, but he is looking closely at opportunities to promote data center careers locally.

Susan asked Nate about his desire to develop pre-apprenticeship opportunities for the trades. He admitted he doesn't know exactly what that would like, but said that pre-apprenticeship as an option

in the school districts would be beneficial. Heidi mentioned the construction and trades programs at the Tech Center, and the group agreed that there are plenty of examples of tech centers adopting pre-apprenticeships in the region. Lisa also mentioned Advanced Energy Management's youth internship and mentorship models.

Susan asked how AI is impacting the board members' businesses. Zach said that Stemilt is just scratching the surface with AI, but has an entire department devoted to technology innovation. He mentioned an automated sprayer project in Quincy in partnership with Yamaha and continuous camera systems mounted on orchard tractors to monitor fruit status. Nate said he doesn't see AI as a threat or a benefit in the near term for the construction trades. He cited the balance between one worker operating a system or five workers doing the same work by hand. Ryan said that Sabey is developing their own AI systems in-house to assist with operations and uses it for research and information gathering. He said it's as important for today's career seekers to understand how to use AI as it used to be to understand how to use email or Microsoft Office.

Aaron asked where to focus effort in the next few years. The board members responded to focus on agriculture, technology applications and data analytics, entrepreneurship development, and small business support.

Board Meeting & Recognition Banquet

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM. The full board meeting will be on Tuesday, September 29 at 4 PM via Zoom.